

BROOK TROUT, BULL TROUT OR DOLLY VARDEN?



Why you should care.

Bull trout and Dolly Varden are native to Washington waters and are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Brook trout are imported from other states and can negatively impact bull trout and Dolly Varden. All three species look very much alike and often live in the same waters. Brook trout may be harvested in most waters, but bull trout/Dolly Varden harvest is limited to a few select waters (see special rules for details). Here's how to tell them apart.

Brook Trout



Black spots or "worm tracks" on dorsal fin.

Dolly Varden/Bull Trout



No distinct spots on dorsal fin.

The dorsal fin is the key to telling them apart. If the dorsal fin has black spots or "worm tracks," it's a brook trout. If the dorsal fin is clear or olive colored, with no distinct spots, it's a bull trout or Dolly Varden.

So remember, in waters that are closed to harvest of bull trout:

No black, put it back!

To report illegal activity, please call: 1-800-477-6224

Selected Washington Game Fish



Rainbow Trout

Body color is variable and may be silvery in lakes and reservoirs. It has a red to pink streak on its side and irregular spotting. There are no teeth on the back of the tongue.



Coastal Cutthroat Trout

Body color is variable. The maxillary (upper jaw bone) usually extends beyond the margin of the eye. The hyoid teeth are behind the tongue. There may be a red or orange slash on the underside of the jaw. Spotting is more closely grouped toward the tail. Sea-run coastal cutthroat return in fall.



Golden Trout

Coloration is brilliant and distinct with a green back and gold-toned sides. There are a few spots below mid-point of the body and white tips on the dorsal, anal and pelvic fins. Parr marks show on the side of the body.



Lake Trout (Mackinaw)

Dark gray or gray green above with a light gray to white belly. Colored spots are absent, fins have small white borders, and the tail is forked. It inhabits large, deep lakes.



Kokanee (Silver Trout)

Its back is greenish blue to silver with faint speckling. The sides and belly are silvery with no distinct spotting. When kokanee spawn in fall, their sides turn red to scarlet. The inside of the mouth is white, not black as in some salmon.



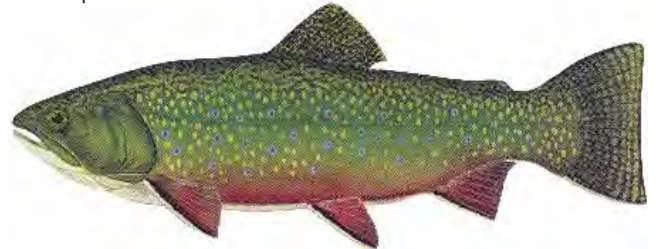
Steelhead (Female)

Steelhead are ocean-run rainbow which run in both summer and winter seasons, returning after one to three years at sea.



Brown Trout

This trout's back is brown or olive with large spots. Sides are light brown to yellowish with large dark spots surrounded by halos of blue-gray. The tail has few spots.



Brook Trout

Dark green or blue with white belly, its upper body and dorsal fin have wormlike markings. Its sides have yellow and pink spots with blue rings. The lower fins are white-tipped and the tail is square.



Dolly Varden/Bull Trout

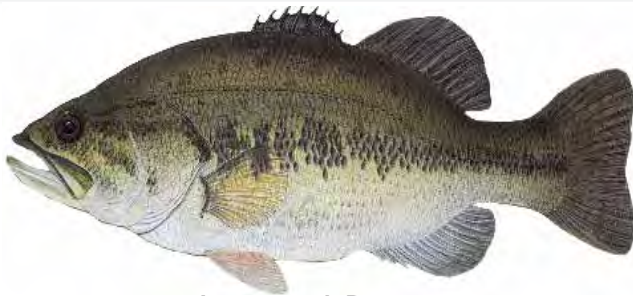
This fish is olive green to brown above and on the sides with no wormlike markings. There are cream or crimson spots. The tail is slightly forked. Dolly Varden are a sea-run version, more silvery in color. Bull trout are found in Eastern and Western Washington.



Whitefish

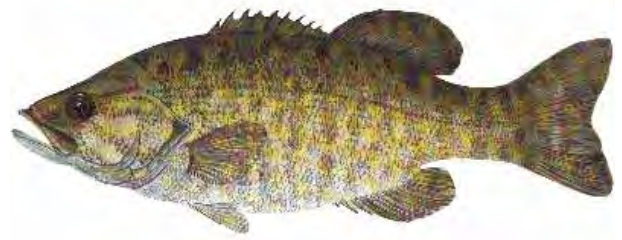
Coloration is light grayish-blue on back with silvery sides and a dull, whitish belly. It has large scales, and a small mouth without teeth.

Selected Washington Game Fish



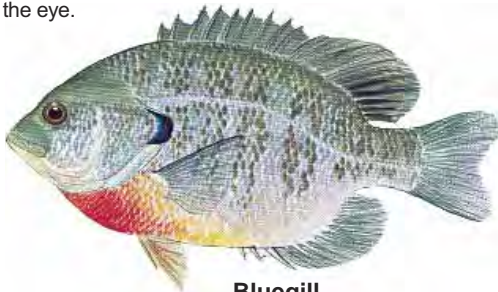
Largemouth Bass

This bass is dark green on the back and sides, with a dark, horizontal band along its sides. The belly is white. The large jaw, when closed, extends behind the eye.



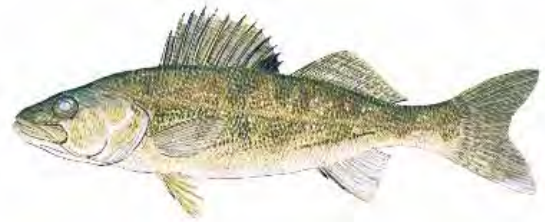
Smallmouth Bass

This bass is dark olive to brown on the back, with a white belly. The sides are bronze and have dark vertical bands. The small jaw does not extend behind the eyes.



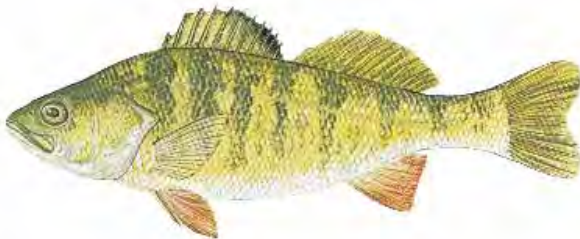
Bluegill

The bluegill is olive green to bluish with a blue and orange lower body. It has vertical bars on each side and solid black gill opercular lobes.



Walleye

Coloration is black to brown on a whitish background. The lower portion of the tail fin is also whitish. It has a dark spot on the first dorsal fin, but no strong cross bars on the sides. The teeth are elongated.



Yellow Perch

This perch has a greenish to yellow body, a white belly, and vertical dark crossbars on each side. There are no prominent teeth.



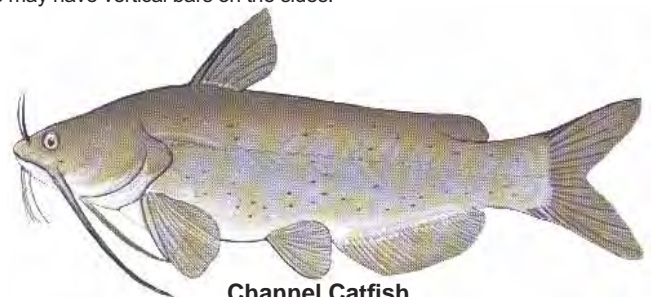
Crappie

The body is silvery, with dark spots. The fins have dark bands. White crappie may have vertical bars on the sides.



Bullhead

The body is darkish-black to brown. Its head is not as flat as a channel catfish. The cat-like barbels on its mouth are brown or yellow. The skin has no scales. There are no spots on the side, and the tail is not forked.



Channel Catfish

The body goes from blackish to silvery to white on the sides. There may be some small irregular spots on the sides. Its skin lacks scales. It has cat-like black barbels on the mouth and jaw, a flat head and forked tail.



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CLASSIC TROUT



Salmon Identification

OCEAN PHASE

Chinook Salmon

Large black spots on back, dorsal fin, and both the upper and lower lobes of the tail. Dark mouth with a black gum line. Average size scales. Silver pigment on the tail. Prominent teeth.



Coho Salmon

Black spots on back with a few spots on the upper portion of the tail. White mouth with a white gum line and dark tongue. Average size scales. Silver pigment on the tail.



Chum Salmon

No prominent spots on back or tail (small speckles may be present). White mouth with a white gum line and dark tongue. Large scales. Caudal peduncle (tail base) is slender. Silver pigment on the tail.



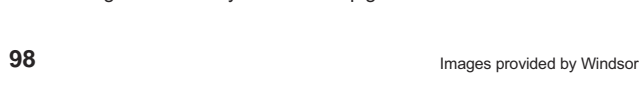
Pink Salmon

Generally large black spots on back and heavy oval shaped black blotches on the upper and lower lobes of the tail. White mouth with a black gum line and tongue. Very small scales. No silver pigment on the tail. Flexible (rubbery) lower jaw.



Sockeye Salmon

No prominent spots on back or tail (small speckles may be present). White mouth with a white gum line and dark tongue. Average size scales. Prominent gold-colored eyes. No silver pigment on the tail. Small teeth.



SPAWNING PHASE

Chinook Salmon

Chinook Salmon do not display the conspicuous morphological changes of pink, chum and sockeye salmon during the spawning stage. Typically, Pacific salmon turn from the silvery bright ocean coloration to a darker color as they approach spawning. Chinook are often the largest of the Pacific salmon, and the large size is characteristic in mature fish.



Coho Salmon

In mature male coho salmon, the upper jaw forms an elongated hooked snout and the teeth become greatly enlarged. The spawning color of the male is generally brighter than that of the female and is characterized by the dorsal surface and head turning bluish-green. The sides of the males develop a broad red streak. In females, the jaws also elongate but the development is much less extreme than of the males.



Chum Salmon

Chum salmon display characteristic olive-green and purple (calico) vertical bars on the sides of the body as they approach the spawning phase. Both males and females develop hooked noses and large canine-like teeth, although the males characteristics are more pronounced.



Pink Salmon

As male pink salmon begin to enter the spawning phase, they develop a prominent hump in front of the dorsal fin like that of the male sockeye salmon. Males develop a characteristic elongated snout and large teeth. Body color in both males and females darkens from a bright silvery appearance to a pale slate, brownish, or greenish-gray on the back and sides and a pale whitish color below. Small, oblong irregular black spots are present on the back and sides, and on the dorsal and tail fins.



Sockeye Salmon

Sockeye salmon turn bright red on their body, and olive-green on the head as they begin to enter the spawning phase of their life. Males of this species develop a prominent hump in front of the dorsal fin. Also, the male's snout becomes elongated and canine-like teeth grow out of the receding gums. Females undergo distinct color change but retain their body shape.

Atlantic Salmon



Male Atlantic salmon



Female Atlantic salmon

Atlantic salmon have large black spots on the gill covers and back, with rarely any spots on the tail fin. Their scales are large, there is no red stripe along the lateral line and they have 8-10 anal fin rays. Atlantic salmon may be taken from marine waters during any open salmon season, and from anadromous (not landlocked) freshwater during any open salmon or trout season. Anglers may not, however, continue to fish for Atlantic salmon after a daily limit of another species of salmon has been retained. In landlocked lakes, Atlantic salmon may be taken as part of the trout daily limit. Seasons and size limits in place for trout apply to Atlantic salmon in landlocked lakes. Opportunities to harvest Atlantic salmon beyond those listed in the pamphlet will be announced to the news media and carried on WDFW's recreational fishing hotline.

Coho and Chinook Salmon Identification



Coho salmon have black spots on their back with a few spots on the upper portion of the tail, and a white gum line and dark tongue.



Chinook have large black spots on their back, dorsal fin, and both the upper and lower lobes of the tail, and a dark mouth with a black gum line.



Wild/Hatchery Identification

In order to provide salmon & steelhead fishing opportunities, WDFW and the Tribes have marked salmon & steelhead by clipping the adipose fin (a small fatty fin directly behind the dorsal fin). In areas designated "release wild <insert fish name>", fin clipped salmon and steelhead are the only fish that may be retained. The picture to the right shows a wild coho salmon and a fin clipped or hatchery coho salmon. Please be careful in releasing wild fish— they are your fishing future! For tips on the best way to release fish, please see page 14. In Marine Areas 5-13, it is illegal to bring a wild salmon or a species of salmon aboard a vessel if it is unlawful to retain those salmon. "Aboard a vessel" is defined as inside the gunwale. In Marine Area 2-2, it is unlawful to totally remove salmon from the water if it is illegal to retain those fish, except anglers fishing from boats 30' or longer are exempt.



Hatchery coho
Adipose fin has been clipped – leaving a healed scar in its place.

Wild coho
Intact adipose fin.

Marine Fish Identification



Yelloweye Rockfish

Orange-red to yellow body color, bright yellow eye, fins may be tinged with black. Also called rasphead rockfish and red snapper. A large rockfish.



Canary Rockfish

Bright orange or yellow body, mottled with grey. Fins are orange without black tinge. Three stripes across the head.



Black Rockfish

Body black or grey in color. Two fins on back. Also called seabass and black bass.



Quillback Rockfish

Body brown with yellow mottling. High fin on back with yellow mottling. May have freckles on head and throat. Spines on head.



Copper Rockfish

Body variable in color with light colored stripe along the rear. Two fins on back.



Pacific Cod

Brown to grey body with lighter mottling. Three fins on back and a large "whisker" under lower jaw. Also called true cod and grey cod.



Walleye Pollock

Body brown with mottling. Three fins on back. The "whisker" under lower jaw is absent or very small.



Pacific Hake

Body dark or silver grey becoming silvery below. Two fins on back, the second being deeply notched. Black inside of mouth. Large mouth with sharp teeth. Also called whiting.



Cabezon

Body olive green to grey with lighter mottling. Two fins on back. Flaplike cirrus on head. Small teeth.



Lingcod

Body dark brown, grey or green with mottling on sides. A single long fin on back with only one notch. Large mouth with large teeth. Can reach five feet in length.